

**MINUTES OF THE LOCAL MEETING OF THE
WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
November 17, 2009**

The local jurisdiction meeting of the Washington State Transportation Commission was called to order at 9:00 a.m., on Tuesday, November 17, 2009 at the Holiday Inn Downtown, 3105 Pine Street, Everett, Washington.

Commissioners present at the meeting were: Chair Moser, Elmira Forner, Dan O’Neal, Bob Distler, Latisha Hill and Philip Parker.

CHAIRMAN WELCOME AND COMMISSION INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Moser opened the meeting with Commissioner introductions and acknowledgment of Senator Jean Berkey.

Senator Berkey thanked the Commission for visiting Everett.

EVERETT AND SNOHOMISH COUNTY WELCOME

Mayor Ray Stephanson, City of Everett, thanked the Commission for visiting Everett. He explained that the City of Everett, now with 103,200 citizens, is different from peoples’ expectations. Boeing is the largest employer; the US Navy is second, and Providence Hospital is third with a growing medical presence and \$500 million improvement bringing 2200 new employees. The emergency room at Everett Providence accepts more patients than Harborview. The naval footprint is changing, with the loss of an aircraft carrier and more coast guard presence. Over 40 freight trains a day head eastbound through Everett. The City needs to find funds to replace Broadway Bridge over the BNSF line.

So far the city has avoided severe budget cuts. Projected to double in population by 2040, the city’s biggest transportation challenge is improvement of East-West corridors. To accommodate its population growth, Everett also needs light rail in operation by 2040.

Mike Cooper, Chair, Snohomish County Council

Explained that the top legislative priority for Snohomish County for the last several years is US 2 east of I-5; it is a joint priority with the City of Everett. We work together to find solutions for our citizens.

When Snohomish County updated its comprehensive plan in 2008, it included Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) reduction and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reduction policies. We can’t continue to pave to build capacity. Because more east-west capacity can’t be built, the County, the cities and transit providers need to expand Commute Trip Reduction programs and Bus Rapid Transit. This will require new revenue sources.

Action/Follow-Up Items: None.

TRANSPORTATION 101-A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF FUNDING AND PLANNING IN WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION

Paul Parker, Senior Policy Analyst, WSTC, provided a brief overview of transportation funding and planning in Washington State.

To view this presentation please click on the link:

http://wstc.wa.gov/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2009/Nov17/20091117_BP3_Transportation101.pdf

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

Bob Drewel -- Executive Director, Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)

Ray Stephanson, President, PSRC

Mike Cummings, Transportation Planning Program Manager

PSRC connects land use, transportation and economic development with Vision 2030 and the Transportation 2040 plan. PSRC has addressed the land use and transportation aspects of the region's military presence by viewing it as a distinct economic cluster.

The PSRC Transportation Planning Board has sent a preferred alternative Regional Transportation Plan (Plan) to the PSRC Executive Board for a December 3 vote. The Plan contains strategies to address three major themes:

- Congestion and mobility
- Climate Change
- Transportation funding

The Plan expects a lot of GHG reduction from emerging vehicle technology. It also expects land use changes and an improved jobs/housing balance to cut GHG by 6-9 percent.

Over \$100 billion of Plan expenditure invests in maintenance and operations of the existing system. Implementation of the Plan strategies will require \$65 billion in new revenue over the life of the Plan; although a large number, this is less than the current regional per capita public expenditure for transportation. The Plan anticipates \$15 billion of new money in each of the first two decades and an additional \$35 billion in the 2030 - 2040 decade.

Within the PSRC Region, Snohomish and Pierce Counties have different transportation needs than King County. US 2 should be viewed as a freight corridor alternative to I-90.

Joni Earl – Sound Transit

Sound Transit (ST) relies mainly on sales tax and MVET for funding; since passage of ST2 last year, mostly sales tax. As a result, due to the economic downturn, ST anticipates 20 percent less revenue over the time frame to implementation of the ST2 package. However, ST still expects to deliver on time and within budget by eliminating project reserves and by moving forward faster to take advantage of low bids.

October 2009 light rail ridership is less than expected, at 16,100 per day. ST probably will miss its December 2009 target of 21,000 per day. But, the Tukwila-SeaTac link is

two weeks and \$1 million dollars under budget. ST still expects 26,000 per day by the end of 2010.

University Link is now under construction and early preliminary engineering is underway on the East Link alignment to Bellevue and Redmond. ST 2 is funding 4 more daily trains between Tacoma and Seattle, but there is no track capacity to add Sounder service to the north. Additional track would require filling about 30 acres of Puget Sound.

ST has two legislative requests:

1. adjust ST annexation boundary automatically when a city annexes new territory;
2. add ST representation to Capital Projects Board

Action/Follow-Up Items: None.

CITY AND COUNTY TRANSPORTATION ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES

Snohomish County

Steve Thomsen – Public Works Director

SnoCAP is the I-5 Snohomish Corridor Action Plan, an investment strategy to address congestion on I-5, SR 9 and other key Snohomish County roadways. The road system resembles a ladder, with I-5 and SR 9 as the sidepieces and SR 524, SR 96, US 2, and SR 528 as the rungs. With rapid growth to the north, there is a need to extend I-5 HOV lanes northward and add more rungs to the I-5/SR 9 ladder. A multi-modal element is being added to the SnoCAP plan: the goal is moving 10 percent of commuters out of cars; now at 5 percent.

County resources are decreasing as the cities grow and the unincorporated area shrinks. Incentives created by the legislature have accelerated the rate of annexation.

Action/Follow-Up Items: None.

To view this presentation please click on the link:

http://wstc.wa.gov/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2009/Nov17/20091117_BP05A_CityCoTranspSnohomishCo.pdf

City of Everett

Ryan Sass – City Engineer

Tom Hingson – Director, Everett Transit

Consistent with areas tradition of intergovernmental collaboration, the City of Everett has updated its Everett Freight Access and Mobility Study, adding the City of Marysville as a partner. (The original 1998 Partnership included the Port and businesses.) This update includes 17 projects: 14 road and three rail.

The priority projects are:

- SR 529/I-5 interchange;
- West Marine View Dr/Rucker/41st St freight corridor;
- SR 526/Hardeson interchange.

The City also wants to extend SR 526 eastward to US 2 to add another rung to the ladder. Everett Transit (ET), the City bus service is very focused on service to Everett residents; it collaborates with CT to serve outside the city and on what is best for the customer (such as improved paratransit connections that save both systems money). ET collects only 6/10 cent sales tax to operate its system; it will begin sharing 5 cents with CT next year for *Swift* service.

ET partnerships with Imagine Children's Museum and Mattel Toys/Matchbox help to recruit future bus riders.

Action/Follow-Up Items: None.

To view this presentation please click on the link:

http://wstc.wa.gov/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2009/Nov17/20091117_BP05B_EverettFreightAccessMobStudy.pdf

Other cities in Snohomish County

Bill Franz -- City of Lynnwood, Public Works Director

Joe Marine -- Mayor of Mukilteo

Tim Haden -- City of Snohomish

Bill Franz heads the Infrastructure Coordinating Committee (ICC), a staff subgroup (the County, all cities, the transit agencies, and WSDOT) of Snohomish County Tomorrow, a collaboration of elected officials that develops county-wide planning policies under GMA. ICC distributes regional transportation funds and assists local cooperation.

Lynnwood, a PSRC-designated regional growth center, is developing a city center, transit improvements and using ITS to reduce congestion. The operating budget for city streets is about \$2 million. Transportation needs for Lynnwood's City Center is about \$100 million.

Mayor Marine emphasized that Mukilteo is proud of its national ranking as 10th best community under 50,000 population. It would rank higher without the SR 525 ferry traffic that divides the City. It requests a feasibility study of rerouting SR 525 through the industrial area. He suggested that the State fund additional transportation projects by using construction sales tax revenues from road projects.

Snohomish is one of the oldest cities in the county. In addition to seeking improvements to SR 9 and US 2, the East Side BNSF rail corridor between Renton and Snohomish is a valuable short-term asset for excursion rail and for long-term commuter rail.

Action/Follow-Up Items: None.

To view this presentation please click on the link:

http://wstc.wa.gov/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2009/Nov17/20091117_BP05C_CityLynnwood.pdf

Community Transit and Everett Transit

Todd Morrow -- Community Transit

There is a shared vision in Snohomish County to move people and freight, rather than move cars. Community Transit (CT) provides bus service throughout the county and beyond. Its longest route is Stanwood to Seattle: 53 miles. CT operates 21 Park and Ride lots with 6,736 spaces. It assesses the maximum sales tax rate: 9/10 of a cent.

With a sluggish economy, ridership is flat and falling a bit. CT sales tax revenue is down 18 percent from 2007; a projected cumulative sales tax decline over time of \$180 million. Farebox recovery is about 20 percent.

CT is currently doing its first long-range transit plan for 2010-2030, and proceeding with major capital projects:

- *Swift* Bus Rapid Transit on SR 99 Corridor between Everett and Shoreline
- ORCA implementation
- Mountlake Terrace Transit Center
- Double-deck buses (built by Alexander Dennis)

Swift BRT is a joint effort of CT and Everett Transit, a city bus system. CT and Everett Transit believe that *Swift* provides a great example of local control and decision making. They could not have moved ahead to implement so quickly in a Transit mega-agency.

Action/Follow-Up Items: Extensive briefing on PSRC Transportation 2040 at December Commission meeting.

To view these presentations please click on the links:

http://wstc.wa.gov/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2009/Nov17/20091117_BP05D1_CommunityTransitUpdate.pdf

http://wstc.wa.gov/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2009/Nov17/20091117_BP05D2_EverettTransit.pdf

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION REGIONAL PROJECTS AND PERSPECTIVES

Lorena Eng -- Regional Administrator

WSDOT is investing \$1.69 billion in Snohomish County projects and working with governmental and private sector partners, including the Snohomish County Committee for Improved Transportation (SCCIT), to stretch dollars further. Snohomish County provided substantial funding for a US 2 striping/rumble strip project.

In addition to US 2 safety improvements, major unmet needs on the state system in Snohomish County include:

- SR 522 -- Paradise Lake to Snohomish River (\$143 million)
- I-5/128th interchange (\$185 million)

- US 2 interchanges (\$396 million)
- SR-9 widening (\$366.7 million)
- US 2 interchange: Bickford Avenue and SR-9 (moving forward with some work now)
- Expanding ITS in Snohomish County

Action/Follow-Up Items: None.

To view this presentation please click on the link:

http://wstc.wa.gov/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2009/Nov17/20091117_BP06_SnohomishCoProjects.pdf

TRIBAL TRANSPORTATION ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

Glen Gobin – Tulalip Tribe Business Chairman

Steve Gobin – QuilCeda Village General Deputy Manager

Casey Stevens – Stillaguamish Tribe Transportation Planner

The Tulalip Tribe is a major economic development driver in the Marysville area. The casino/hotel has created 3,400 jobs; the other area businesses bring employment to about 6,000 jobs.

Tulalip Tribe relationships with the city, county and state have been difficult at times, but the Tribe feels that relations are much improved. The tribe has funded projects, such as the 4th Street Overpass, with its own funds. The Tribe also took the lead on 88th street interchange, which for about two years was known on the reservation as “the bridge to nowhere” until it connected to the reservation as the beginning of QuilCeda Village. Tulalip has invited participation in 116th Street interchange from the County and Marysville.

The Tulalip Tribe wants to correct the perception that it is not mitigating its impacts on transportation; we have our own process. At 116th, we have put in a stormwater mitigation system.

The Tulalip Tribe participates in the Tribal Transportation Planning Organization (TTPO) because it must to access BIA funding, etc. Collaboration there with the state doesn’t work down to local level.

The Stillaguamish Tribe is very different in size and scope from the Tulalip Tribe. It has no reservation, about 200 tribal members in multiple locations, mostly east of I-5. In 1998, the Stillaguamish Tribe made economic development its highest priority. Now there is a casino and a native plant nursery.

Transit is important to its members. The Stillaguamish has worked with the Snohomish County Transportation Coalition (SNOTRAC), which aims to fill gaps in rural transit. A “Pay Your Pal” program authorizes payment to driver-helpers; this is inexpensive paratransit. The Tribe also sees an opportunity to better utilize Park & Ride lots and build direct access ramps to improve HOV ratio on I-5.

Indian Reservation Roads (IRRs) continue to pose a major challenge for tribes across the state. Bureau of Indian Affairs' IRR Program is headquartered in the Southwest US; only \$20 million is available to be divided among 44 NW tribes. It is difficult to create an accurate inventory of IRRs; tribes need assistance with data entry and understanding BIA requirements that frequently change. WSDOT did an IRR inventory in one year with one person; it turned out not to satisfy BIA requirements. Eastern Washington University's Tribal Technical Assistance Program has helpful technical data on tribal road safety.

Action/Follow-Up Items: Assist tribes in working with the BIA. Please include tribes in state transportation planning and development in a meaningful manner; we are trying to provide jobs and a tax base for our people. We need to get our projects on a priority list the state can recognize, which often requires partnering with local government.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSPORTATION

Rich White -- Boeing Company

Transportation grid needs to function as a system.

Our parts come by air, rail and road. Boeing has major facilities in about 27 states.

Boeing has prioritized transportation funding in the state; not only a production issue, but a quality of life issue. For example, between 30-35 percent of employees use the US-2 trestle; the current mayor of Lake Stevens is a Boeing employee.

Airports need to operate efficiently.

The Long-term Air Transportation Strategy was important work. We have a close relationship with Boeing Field and Paine Field (where we deliver wide-body planes to customers). Paine Field is spending over \$30 million to upgrade.

Boeing sees NextGen (digital-based air traffic control system) as a key component of its market development.

Ports and trade are critical to our success.

Port infrastructure is critical; Washington is one day closer to Asia than LA ports. All 777 panels for assembly are coming to Everett through the Ports of Seattle, Tacoma and Everett. Boeing is transitioning to bring the all to the Port of Everett.

Patty deGroodt -- Chief Strategic Officer, Providence Health and Services

Providence has been in Everett since 1905 and is the most award-winning hospital in the state. After its current expansion is complete, the hospital will have 468 beds, about 5,000 employees. Altogether, Providence has 12 facilities across the county and 800 medical providers.

How do hospitals impact transportation and economic development? When expanding or relocating, businesses first ask about local schools. Then health care.

Our employees need a good transportation network. Some come from as far as Bellingham, Tacoma and the islands. The parking garage for the hospital has 1,000 stalls, built at a cost of \$30,000 per stall.

Our patients also need easy access. Examples:

- When emergency happens, people need access to healthcare. Our Centralia hospital was isolated for three days during last year's floods.
- Someone who suffered a heart attack on Whidbey made it to the Everett CCU in 90 minutes; WSDOT worked with us and law enforcement to hold the ferry for the ambulance.
- We try to locate our clinics on bus lines to provide access.

John Mohr, Executive Director, Port of Everett

The Port of Everett generates \$247 million in state and local taxes annually; about \$160 million to state. A deepwater port, it specializes in breakbulk cargo (importing cement from China and windmills from India and Japan; some custom blades built in Sedro Wooley are for export) and has increasing containerized volumes. It also operates the largest marina on the west coast and owns the largest beach on the west coast (Jetty Island). Port of Everett also has a shipyard operation that includes a Todd Shipyard facility that does regular WSF maintenance and has navy contracts. There is only a small drydock capacity.

The Mt. Baker dock was a joint effort between Port of Everett and aerospace industry. Boeing built a 1.9 mile rail spur that runs from its assembly plant to the BNSF mainline.

The Port has applied for a TIGER grant to upgrade the south terminal intermodal project, including installation of high voltage power for cold ironing ships. And, designated as a rail recovery area for Seattle/Tacoma ports, it is adding 2,300 feet of rail.

Action/Follow-Up Items: Continue to improve the entire statewide transportation grid and protect flight paths.

Northwest ports have a strategic location for expected wind energy growth in the Northern Tier states. It would help shipping to reduce the 7 am to 7 pm restrictions on superloads on some state routes.

To view this presentation please click on the link:

http://wstc.wa.gov/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2009/Nov17/20091117_BP08C_PortOfEverett.pdf

HOUSING, COMMUTERS AND TRANSPORTATION

Will Hall -- Sr. Legislative Analyst, Snohomish County Council

Hiller West -- Planning Director, City of Monroe

Paul Roberts -- Principal, Paul Roberts & Associates

About half the county's population lies south and west of the Snohomish River Valley along with most of the jobs. Access is severely limited when flooding occurs because the Snohomish and Stillaguamish river valleys and diking systems are designed to overtop. This reduces flood disasters, but increases flood frequency and disruption.

Connect the dots: Boeing, the Naval Base and Providence Everett are the three biggest employers. I-5 HOV lanes end north of Everett at the river, SR-9 is two lanes, much of SR-522 and (all of) SR 203 is two lanes, and the boundaries of Sound Transit also end at the river.

The net imbalance between Snohomish and King Counties is 105,000 commuters. Snohomish County also attracts workers; the largest employer of Skagit and Whatcom County residents is Boeing Everett.

PSRC Vision 2040 plans to improve jobs/housing balance. Today, the average commuter in Snohomish County travels 14 miles to work. There is a large difference between people living within Urban Growth Areas (UGAs), who travel an average 12 miles to work; those who live outside UGAs travel 21 miles. Although it is often said that people "drive until they qualify" (for a housing loan), we have learned that many new developments in rural area were big houses on big lots. The vast majority of affordable housing in Snohomish County is in urban areas.

The County has taken recent action to reduce population growth in rural areas. Prior to GMA, 28 percent of people were locating in rural areas; 90 percent of future growth is targeted for urban areas. Snohomish County did probably the largest downzone anywhere in Washington and eliminated allowing Fully Contained Communities.

From the City of Monroe's perspective, it is trying to increase allowed densities and make them more compatible and attractive. Although it started as a rural center, future growth in Monroe will be largely in commuters. Like Lynnwood and Marysville, it also is planning for urban centers and town centers. The demographic trends – smaller families, more singles – are consistent with greater density, but density won't be accepted unless it is designed well.

Another positive trend that will assist in promoting density is significant public transit improvements. The totality of county efforts in rural areas and city efforts in attracting density will make real the vision of a more urban future.

The US 2 bottleneck through Monroe is a regional and statewide problem. When US-2 isn't functioning well, it backs up into Marysville and Everett. As in other cities located on State Routes, a lot of commercial development has been permitted on the highway, slowing down through traffic.

Paul Roberts commented that it is a false reality that new development will fund the infrastructure that businesses require. A Commissioner commented that the temptation of the sales tax revenue from the Wal-Mart is greater than the assumed problem of lack of concurrency.

US 2 is the primary commercial corridor for Monroe and the only east-west connector besides I-90 for most of the state. US 2 improvements are very important for Chelan County.

The City recognizes the problem and is working to build a parallel access road for US 2 businesses. It also has entered into mitigation agreements for new developments to help fund state highway improvements. Still, the City wants a US 2 bypass built; because most of the right-of-way for the bypass is owned by the state, Phase I of the bypass will cost about \$50 million.

Action/Follow-Up Items: Despite the need for better implementation of GMA policies, annexations, capital facilities and concurrency are not well-addressed in 1990 GMA. Tax revenues post-annexation lag 12-24 months.

The Legislature can provide options to incent the moving of people instead of cars.

To view these presentations please click on the links:

http://wstc.wa.gov/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2009/Nov17/20091117_BP09A_HousingCommutersTranspSnohomishCo.pdf

http://wstc.wa.gov/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2009/Nov17/20091117_BP09C_CityMonroe.pdf

PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul W. Locke, citizen, said that too much property tax is being diverted from transportation to social services. Half of the population is living off the rest of us.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

The Commission approved a 2010 meeting schedule that includes local meetings in Prosser, Aberdeen, Omak or Okanogan, and Bellevue.

The Commission meeting adjourned at 5 p.m., on November 17, 2009.

This meeting has been recorded. If you would like additional meeting details tapes are available for a nominal fee. Please contact the Transportation Commission Office at (360)705-7070.

WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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REEMA GRIFFITH, Executive Director

DATE OF APPROVAL